

SPORTS

Sluggish Ducks lose to Utah; Brandon scores 31

By Robert Weber
Emerald Sports Reporter

The Oregon Ducks got their second taste of life on the road in college basketball Thursday night, and it left them feeling a little queasy.

The Ducks headed into Utah's Huntsman Center fresh off of a 98-71 win over UAB and looking to extend their winning streak to two games, but they ran into a Utah squad that wasn't about to let that happen.

Using a balanced attack and a big surge late in the first half, Utah (5-1) managed to control the game and cruise to a 95-81 win. Six Utes, including the entire starting five, scored in double figures, led by Walter Watts with 18.

The latest chapter in Oregon's roller coaster year left Coach Don Monson shaking his head and begging for some consistency.

"Well, obviously we didn't play very well," Monson said. "We weren't ready to play, and I don't know why; you might ask the players why."

One Duck that was definitely ready to play was point guard Terrell Brandon. As he did last a week ago at Missouri, Brandon provided the bulk of the team's offense throughout the game. He collected 17 of Oregon's 34 points in the first half and finished with 31 points, which ties a career-high.

The 5-foot-11 junior hit 14 of his 21 shots and also chipped in with five assists and four steals. The little help he did get came from Richard Lucas and freshman Clyde Jordan.

Lucas, the Ducks' 6-foot-7 senior center, finished with 12 points and seven rebounds while Jordan added 11 points and eight boards in a career-high 25 minutes of action.

Afterwards, Monson said, "Terrell played hard and very well, and Lucas played hard but was just out of sync. Clyde Jordan is a good offensive player with some skills and he's going to help us."

Oregon closed to within five late in the first half before Utah ran off 10 unanswered points to build a 48-34 halftime edge. It got worse for the Ducks in the second half as they fell behind by as many as 20 before making

one last charge with about four minutes left.

A Brandon three-pointer with 2:10 left closed the gap to 87-77, but the Ducks would get no closer as Utah pulled away down the stretch.

After such a strong performance at home on Tuesday, Oregon seemed tired and uncomfortable playing away from home. Monson noticed this and

reminded his squad that playing on the road is just part of the game.

"We didn't work hard enough, and they just wanted it more than we did," Monson said. "I know we were dead-legged, but when you come into somebody else's place, you know they are going to come after you. I've told my players that we can't play every game

at Mac Court."

Despite the disappointment in his team's performance, Monson was quick to give praise the effort of Rick Majerus' team.

"Give Utah credit, they played well and hard," Monson said.

Credit should also be given to Majerus for even being on the sidelines. Just days after his

Utes suffered a 73-66 setback in McArthur Court last year, Majerus checked into a hospital complaining of chest pains.

A seven-bypass operation left the coach feeling better but out of basketball for the rest of the season. Now he's back with a little less weight, a little more restraint but with the same fire in his eyes.

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OREGON (81)
Lyden 3-7, 0-0, 8, Fife 2-5, 0-0, 4, Lucas 5-7, 2-6, 12, Brandon 14-21, 1-1, 31, Mixon 3-11, 3-3, 9, Johnson 0-0, 0-0, 0, Jordan 5-13, 0-0, 11, Patterson 0-2, 0-0, 0, Blair 1-3, 0-0, 2, van der Veen 0-0, 0-0, 0, O'Neil 1-1, 0-0, 2, Jackson 1-1, 0-0, 2. Totals 35-71, 6-10, 81.

UTAH (85)
Grant 4-10, 6-6, 15, McGrath 6-8, 1-1, 13, Watts 8-9, 2-3, 18, Tate 1-5, 8-8, 10, Wilson 4-10, 1-2, 11, Soto 0-1, 2-2, 2, Rydych 2-4, 1-2, 6, Cain 0-0, 0-0, 0, Dixon 4-5, 0-0, 12, Afeaki 2-4, 4-5, 8. Totals 31-56, 25-29, 95.

Oregon 34 47 81
Utah 48 47 95

3-Point goals — Oregon 5-19 (Brandon 2-5, Lyden 2-4, Jordan 1-4, Mixon 0-5, Blair 0-1), Utah 8-12 (Dixon 4-4, Wilson 2-4, Rydych 1-3, Grant 1-1). Fouled out — None. Rebounds — Oregon 29 (Jordan 8), Utah 36 (McGrath 9), Assists — Oregon 14 (Brandon 5), Utah 19 (Tate 7). Total fouls — Oregon 23, Utah 12. A — 10, 196.

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